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General Assembly
Security Council

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General Assembly
Tenth emergency special session
Agenda item 5
Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-ninth year

Identical letters dated 28 January 2014 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit a statement from the Bishops of the Holy Land Coordination issued today, 28 January 2014 (see annex), calling for justice to be upheld in the Cremisan Valley, near Bethlehem in the Occupied State of Palestine, where Israel, the occupying Power, plans to build its expansionist wall on the land of 58 Palestinian Christian families, in total disrespect for the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice and the resolutions of the United Nations and in grave breach of international law.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter and its annex distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine
to the United Nations

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Annex to the identical letters dated 28 January 2014 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

Urgent need for support as Beit Jala families seek justice:

Bishops call for prayer and for international pressure as Supreme Court of Israel Hearing into Cremisan Valley starts

As Bishops of the Holy Land Coordination, we call for justice to be upheld in the Cremisan Valley, near Bethlehem. Israel's plans to build a security wall on the land of 58 Christian families should be abandoned. We met with many families from Beit Jala during our recent visit to the Holy Land. We heard of their pain and anguish. They are faced with the threatened loss of their land and livelihood as the planned security wall will destroy vineyards, groves and orchards and separate them from their land.

We recognize the right of the State of Israel to security and secure borders. However, the planned route of the security wall deviates sharply from the Green Line, the internationally recognized demarcation line separating Israel and the territories captured in the six-day war of 1967. More than three quarters of the wall's planned route fall outside the Green Line and are illegal according to a landmark advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, while also a flagrant breach of the Geneva Convention and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

We urge our governments to encourage Israel to follow international law. In particular, for Israel to respect the livelihoods of these families and for the people of Beit Jala to be protected from further expropriation of their land and homes by Israel. This is a matter of urgency as on 29 January the Israeli Supreme Court starts its hearing into the building of a security wall in the Cremisan Valley and the families' appeal to protect their land.

Our deep concern, as we have repeatedly stated, is that this planned security wall is more about consolidating the settlement areas and permanently choking off Bethlehem from Jerusalem. This particular plan is a microcosm of the tragic situation in the Holy Land which incites resentment and mistrust, making the possibility of a much-needed solution less likely.

Our prayers are with the people of Beit Jala as they seek justice. We offer them also for all who seek a just peace in the Holy Land.

Bishops of the Holy Land Coordination, 2014

Archbishop Stephen Brislin, South Africa
Bishop Peter Burcher, Scandinavia, Finland and Iceland
Bishop William Crean, Ireland
Bishop Michel Dubost, France
Archbishop Paul-Andre Durocher, Canada
Archbishop Patrick Kelly, England and Wales
Bishop William Kenney, England and Wales

Bishop Declan Lang, England and Wales
Bishop Denis Nulty, Ireland
Bishop Richard Pates, United States of America
Bishop Thomas Renz, Germany
Bishop Janusz Stepnowski, Poland
Archbishop Joan Enric Vives, Spain